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Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Policy Team

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Dear Sirs,

**SUBMISSION TO GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN FIRST PROPOSALS ON BEHALF OF VISTRY HOMES LIMITED – LAND AT HIGHFIELDS (PHASE 2), CALDECOTE**

Savills (UK) Ltd Planning Team are instructed by Vistry Homes to make representations on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals in support of the proposed allocation S/RRA/H Land at Highfields (phase 2), Caldecote.

In summary:

- The inclusion of site S/RRA/H Land at Highfields (phase 2) as an allocation in the Plan is welcomed. Moreover, it is necessary in order to enable villages such as Caldecote, which have very good existing and/or planned public transport connections, to grow and thrive;
- The allocation plan includes 'Phase 1' and 'Phase 2' of the development. The detailed assessment undertaken as part of the preparation of planning application reference 21/02265/FUL (Phase 2) demonstrates that the site can satisfactorily accommodate a total of 140 dwellings together with associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping (i.e. 74 dwellings in addition to the 66 that already have outline permission and reserved matters consent);
- The precise wording of the allocation should be further refined to acknowledge that native hedgerows and specimen trees can provide an appropriate soft eastern edge to the development and village (as accepted by the Councils' Landscape Officer in relation to planning application reference 21/02265/FUL) as an alternative to the current reference in the allocation to a substantial landscape buffer; and
- The site is Suitable, Available and Achievable and can be delivered within the next five years (and indeed development on Phase 2 is programmed to commence as a continuation of Phase 1 upon approval of planning application reference 21/02265/FUL).

Spatial Strategy

We strongly support the statement in the Councils' Development Strategy Topic paper that "Our (*the Councils*)' evidence suggests that housing in the rest of the rural area outside the southern cluster can help support delivery of a range of smaller sites within the area, and support the vitality of our villages".

This is reflective of national policy in the NPPF, which includes (at paragraph 79):

*"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."*

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In addition (paragraph 84):

*“Planning policies ... should enable:*

*... ”*

- a) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”*

It is therefore clear that the inclusion of site S/RRA/H Land at Highfields (phase 2) would play an important role in delivering an appropriate strategy as required by paragraph 35 of the NPPF. The First Proposals includes the proposed allocation of 6 new sites (including S/RRA/H) across the 5 Rural Centres, 13 Minor Rural Centres, 33 Group Villages and 55 Infill Villages. This equates to just 3.3% of the new housing allocations proposed, so the inclusion of sites such as S/RRA/H are particularly important in order to enable villages such as Caldecote, which have very good existing and/or planned public transport connections, to grow and thrive.

### **The site**

The proposed allocation of the site is welcomed, and necessary. The site is outside the Green Belt and being located towards the northern end of the village is particularly well located in relation to a Cambourne to Cambridge Public Transport Scheme stop.

Outline planning permission was granted in July 2017 for 140 dwellings on the site under planning reference S/2510/15/OL. Reserved matters consent was granted for 66 dwellings on the site (under planning reference S/4619/18/RM) and this is under construction. There is a current application for a further 74 dwellings on the site (Phase 2 – reference 21/02265/FUL) i.e. making a total of 140 dwellings. Work undertaken as part of the preparation of application 21/02265/FUL demonstrates that there are no technical matters which would unduly restrict development of the site.

In relation to application 21/02265/FUL, the Councils' Landscape Officer has commented that “Following appropriate landscape mitigation works the site is capable of accommodating a development in line with the LVIA's (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment's) recommendations without resulting in material harm to the surrounding countryside's landscape character and views from the wider and local area”. The wording of the proposed policy states that development should provide a substantial landscape buffer on eastern boundary. Whilst that may be one solution, the submitted landscape strategy demonstrates that proposed native hedgerows and specimen trees can provide an appropriate soft edge to the development and village. The Councils' Landscape Officer has not raised any issues or concerns in relation to this proposed eastern boundary/rural edge.

The work undertaken as part of the preparation of the current application on the site (Phase 2 – reference 21/02265/FUL) demonstrates that the site can satisfactorily accommodate a further 74 dwellings as Phase 2 (to the 66 dwellings with reserved matters consent) together with associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping. As the allocation relates to the whole of the original site (6 hectares) it should refer to the site having a total capacity of approximately 140 homes.

### **The precise wording of the allocation**

It is therefore necessary to amend the wording of the proposed policy from:

“S/RRA/H Land at Highfields (phase 2), Caldecote

- Site area of 6 hectares
- Capacity for approximately 64 homes
- Site with lapsed planning permission in close proximity to Cambourne to Cambridge Public Transport Scheme stop
- Development should accommodate the following constraints:
  - Provide substantial landscape buffer on eastern boundary.”

To (with necessary changes shown as tracked changes):

“S/RRA/H Land at Highfields ~~(phase 2)~~, Caldecote

- Site area of 6 hectares
- Capacity for approximately ~~64~~140 homes
- Site with lapsed planning permission in close proximity to Cambourne to Cambridge Public Transport Scheme stop
- Development should accommodate the following ~~constraints~~component:
  - Provide ~~substantial~~appropriate landscape ~~buffer~~edge on eastern boundary.”

Alternatively, the allocation could specifically relate to the Phase 2 site (as per planning application 21/02265/FUL) and refer to approximately 74 dwellings.

We welcome the opportunity provided to comment on these First Proposals and look forward to continuing to work positively with South Cambridgeshire District Council to bring this site forward.

If there is any further information and/or clarification that we can usefully provide to assist you, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned in the first instance.

Yours faithfully



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Head of Department